

Johnson Pueblo Statement

Following is a transcript of President Johnson's televised report yesterday afternoon, as recorded by The New York Times:

Over the past 15 months the North Koreans have pursued a stepped-up campaign of violence against South Korea and the American troops in the area of the demilitarized zone. Armed raider teams in very large numbers have been sent into South Korea to engage in sabotage and assassination.

On Jan. 19, a 31-man team of North Korean raiders invaded Seoul with the object of murdering the President of the Republic of Korea. In many of these aggressive actions Korean and American soldiers have been killed and wounded.

The North Koreans are apparently attempting to intimidate the South Koreans and are trying to interrupt the growing spirit of confidence and progress in the Republic of Korea. These attacks may also be an attempt by the Communists to divert South Korean and United States military resources, which together are now successfully resisting aggression in Vietnam.

This week the North Koreans committed yet another wanton and aggressive act by seizing an American ship and its crew in international waters. Clearly this cannot be accepted.

We are doing two things: first, we are very shortly today taking the question before the Security Council of the United Nations. The best result would be for the whole world community to persuade North Korea to return our ship and our men and to stop the dangerous course of aggression against South Korea.

We have been making other diplomatic efforts as well. We shall continue to use every means available to find a prompt and a peaceful solution to the problem.

Second, we have taken and we are taking certain precautionary measures to make sure that our military forces are prepared for any contingency that might arise in this area.

These actions do not involve in any way a reduction of our forces in Vietnam.

I hope that the North Koreans will recognize the gravity of the situation which they have created.

I am confident that the American people will exhibit in this crisis, as they have in other crises, determination and unity.

Thank you very much.